

## Department notes

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the gallery of notable portraits, to the natural history and science departments, to the samples of pioneer implements and utensils, to the splendid library with its unrivaled historical and genealogical books and manuscripts, and to the material showing prehistoric Indian life. All this was in perfect accord with the purpose for which the department had been created and sustained. Had the state been more, just in the allocation of funds for the department the results would have been greater, but within the narrow limits set by the law makers, a truly creditable work was done.

In the constant effort to keep *THE ANNALS OF IOWA* on a high plane he was successful. His sense of beauty led him to sponsor the seemingly hopeless job of brushing aside the ugly store buildings and cheap residences surrounding the state capitol—but it was done. He had literally tramped up and down almost every river of Iowa and camped by every lake, so it was inevitable he should throw all his influence into the work of creating Iowa parks and saving Iowa beauty-spots. He encouraged monuments and memorials and the marking of trails and historic scenes. What he did in all these lines will live for long.

Edgar R. Harlan had a fine sense of values in historic material. He applied himself to getting this material together that history writers may have accurate information. He left to others to gain fame as word builders with the facts laid on the record shelves. His fondness for Iowa led him into almost every channel of information, and for many years his footsteps will be followed to good advantage.

ORA WILLIAMS

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### DEPARTMENT NOTES

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To carry out a long desired project of improving the museum displays in natural history, and to assist in installing new exhibits, Maynard F. Reece, an artist especially trained in natural history subjects, joined the staff of the Department in August. As a trained artist, Mr. Reece will



EDGAR RUBEY HARLAN  
1869-1941  
CURATOR OF THE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT  
1909-1937

prepare the art work necessary in the Department, giving special attention to the preparation of backgrounds and settings for the new natural history habitat groups planned. The first two of these exhibits have been completed, one shows a group of pin tail ducks in flight, the other displays the handsome woodduck. Other similar exhibits are planned for the future.

The Department has recently purchased a 16 mm. movie camera to add to its photographic equipment. By means of the movie camera a more complete and comprehensive record can be made of historical events, scenes, and sites, and certain gaps in the civil history field of the Department can be the more easily filled. The camera will also be used extensively in building up a series of natural history films. Several hundred feet have already been made of the operation of agricultural tools and implements common to the late nineteenth century, as demonstrated by the Morris brothers of Stockport, Iowa, on their farm in mid August of this year. A film has also been made of the larger western American mammals. Under certain conditions these films, and others when completed, may be borrowed by interested groups throughout the state.

A Microfilm Library Reader has also been acquired by the Department for viewing microfilms of newspapers and other historical documents. The Department is now receiving the regular microfilm edition of the Des Moines REGISTER, the Des Moines TRIBUNE and the Des Moines SUNDAY REGISTER. This machine makes it possible by use of photographic copies of hitherto inaccessible or rare documents for a quantity of valuable historical records to be added to the files of middle western American history in the Department.

The Archives Division, as custodians of the territorial and state census records of Iowa, has been literally swamped by a growing tide of requests from those seeking additional proofs for the certification of their age, needed for defense, educational, or social welfare programs. These requests have grown steadily in number all spring and summer. Excluding the number of requests for which no record could



be found, in July a total of 281 records were certified, 481 in August, and September recorded a total of 417.

On September 11, Ora Williams, Curator of the Department of History and Archives, accepted on behalf of the State of Iowa a bronze plaque prepared by a Des Moines Lodge of the I.O.O.F., commemorating the membership in that fraternity of Willson Alexander Scott, a generous donor of property at the time the state capital was located in Des Moines in 1857. Presented on the occasion of the international convention of that fraternity, the plaque has been added to the granite marker on the grave of Scott in the southeast corner of the state capital grounds.

During the past quarter Mr. Jack Musgrove of the Museum Division, has been called upon a score of times for talks and lectures on natural history subjects before luncheon, study, sport and social organizations. In most cases photographic slides of natural history subjects taken by Mr. Musgrove were also shown.

Kenneth E. Colton, Director of Manuscripts and Assistant Editor of THE ANNALS OF IOWA, attended the preliminary organization meeting of the Appanoose County Historical Society, Centerville, Iowa, September 2, and spoke briefly of the aims and objectives of the Iowa Association of Local Historical Societies sponsored by the Department of History and Archives and the State Historical Society at Iowa City. On September 8, Mr. Colton spoke to the section meeting of Reference Librarians at the Iowa State Library Association meeting in Ames, on "The Role of the Librarian in Preserving Local History."

Evidence of the near record-breaking attendance at the Iowa State Fair, August 22-29 was seen long before the official figures had been tabulated, in the flood of visitors to the historical building during that week. The number almost equaled that which came during the territorial centennial celebration at the state fair in 1938. The visitors this year set a commendable record in the care and respect shown the museum exhibits during that hectic week.

Mr. R. E. Spencer and family, of Des Moines, represented the State of Iowa and the Iowa Department of History and Archives at the forty-eighth anniversary celebration of the Cherokee Strip Run in Oklahoma, held in Ponca City, September 16, 1941. The original race which opened up the "Strip," in which many Iowans participated, was September 16, 1893. Mr. Spencer, then of Creston, Iowa, made the race with a brother, his mother, and a friend, each of whom succeeded in establishing a claim. Part of that original holding the Spencer family still owns. Through an inquiry made in the press, nearly two dozen Iowans now residing in the state made the race in 1893.

Among the notable acquisitions in the museum division during the past quarter was an excellently well preserved sheep-treadmill used to operate a cream separator on the farm of A. U. Fenton, Blackhawk County, presented by the grandson, Wendell Fenton. Another item of more than general interest received was the "Yost Writing Machine," an early typewriter. While the precise date of manufacture is unknown, it is believed to have been used in the 1880's.

The manuscript division has received a copy of the Catherine Barker Journal from a granddaughter, Miss Eleanor Kimmell, Harvey, Iowa. Covering the pioneer years in Iowa, this journal offers a realistic picture of frontier conditions.

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## NOTABLE DEATHS

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CHARLES FREDERICK BUTLER, banker, died in Springville, Iowa, July 27, 1941. He was born December 8, 1857, on a farm near Springville, the son of Joseph S. and Maria R. Butler. Since 1882 Mr. Butler had been associated with the Exchange Bank of Springville, the bank, founded by his father, was said to have been the oldest bank in Iowa under continuous management. Mr. Butler liberally contributed to Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa; St. Luke's hospital, Cedar Rapids; and Piney Woods Institute, Piney Woods, Alabama. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church.

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